

Interviewing Tips

A job interview can be described as a mutual "exchange of information" because it provides the candidate with an opportunity to both gain information about the department and position, and to discuss his/her own skills, and career goals in relation to the job.

Interviewing helps managers determine three things before they make a hiring decision:

1. Can you do the job?

Managers want to know if you possess the necessary knowledge and abilities to successfully perform the duties of the job.

2. Are you motivated to do the job?

Managers want to know if you are interested in the job and if you will do the job with consistent effort.

3. Will you fit in the organization?

Managers want to know if your work ethic, values, and goals are consistent with the organization, if you will be a team player, and how well you will work with your teammates.

Preparation is an important part of the interview process. The time you spend preparing prior to the interview will be time well spent in your job search process. The following are some tips on what you can do to prepare yourself before, during, and after a job interview.

Before the Interview

- Review the job specification and position description, if available. Job specifications can be found at: http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs/1,1607,7-147-6876_8056---,00.html
- Learn more about the department by visiting their web page.
- Review your résumé and be prepared to discuss your skills relative to the job.
- Have available the names, addresses, and phone number(s) of references the interviewer can contact.
- Bring information you may need to fill out an application (previous employers' addresses, phone numbers, etc.)
- Bring extra copies of your résumé and a notebook.
- Dress for Success -Appearance should reflect maturity and self-confidence. Be neat, clean, and dress in good taste.
- Find out where the interview will be, obtain clear directions, and confirm the time. Plan to arrive 10- 15 minutes early.

During the Interview

- Relax! Think of the interview as a conversation, not an interrogation.
- Be enthusiastic, confident, courteous, and honest.
- Avoid negative body language and signs of nervousness and tension.
- Listen to the questions carefully and give clear, concise, and thoughtful answers.
- Convey interest in the organization and knowledge of the position.
- Ask relevant questions about the job or department.
- End the interview with a firm handshake and thank the interviewers for their time and consideration.

After the Interview

- Send a brief thank-you letter as soon as possible after the interview. Reiterate your interest in the position and your qualifications. It will serve as a reminder to the interviewer that you are qualified for the position, so feel free to mention any topics discussed during your interview.

If you are not selected for the job, politely ask one of the interviewers which areas you could improve on in

One strategy that can help you respond to interview questions about your past work experience is to use the STAR technique. Whenever possible, you will want to frame your responses to such interview questions using the STAR response method.

S= Situation
T= Task
A= Action
R= Results

The steps involved are to describe a SITUATION /TASK encountered, to identify the ACTIONS taken to address the SITUATION or TASK, and to discuss the RESULTS achieved by the ACTIONS.

Interviews are a two-way process. Ask questions to learn more about the job and the organization. Below are some possible questions for you to ask:

- Where does this job fit into the organizational structure?
- How will work be evaluated?
- What opportunities for advancement exist?
- What kind of orientation and training are available to new employees?
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To help you develop information about "you," begin by asking yourself these questions:

Your Qualifications

- What qualifications do you have that relate to the position?
- What new skills or capabilities have you developed recently?
- What are some examples from a previous job where you've shown initiative?
- What have been your greatest accomplishments?
- What is important to you in a job?
- What motivates you in your work?
- What qualities do you find important in a manager, or a co-worker?

Your Career Goals

- What would you like to be doing five years from now?
- How will you judge yourself to be a success? How will you achieve success?
- What type of position are you interested in?
- How will this job fit in your career plans?
- What do you expect from this job?
- When could you start?

Your Work Experience

- What have you learned from your past jobs?
- What are/were your major responsibilities?
- What specific skills used in previous jobs relate to this position?
- How does your previous experience relate to this position?
- What did you like most/least about your last job?

Your Education

- How has your education prepared you for this position?
- What were your favorite classes/activities at school?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Do you plan to continue your education?
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